

Like a Switch Has Been Flicked

by Brandon

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>SUMMARY: Another Rain King post-ep. Scully POV. Not related to "Calm Before the Storm". As to the timeline, this one takes the position that RK occurred -- or will occur -- in August of '99. Scully tries to explain to us when and how her switch was flicked.

Like a Switch Has Been Flicked

by Brandon D. Ray

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Let me make one thing clear from the outset: I did not fall in love with Fox Mulder when I walked back into that high school gymnasium. It just didn't happen that way. Give me some credit.

Not did I fall in love with him when he lifted me over that puddle in the parking lot on the way to our rental car. That was no big deal; we're friends and partners, and we help each other out. Sure, I could have jumped over the puddle, or even walked around it, but I didn't have to. When a pencil rolls under a table or a desk, I'm the one who goes after it. The puddle was just a quid pro quo.

It didn't happen when we got back to the motel, either. Face it: Mulder and I have been crisscrossing the country for going on six years, and this was far from the first time we had to share a room -- although I admit that it was the first time it happened as a consequence of a cow crashing through the roof and landing on Mulder's bed.

It wasn't even the first time we had to share a bed, and before you ask, no, I did not lie there tossing and turning, unable to sleep because of the musky maleness only a few inches away. I slept quite well thank you -- and I did not wake up feeling warm and content and safe because in the night I'd crept into his arms without waking up. Didn't happen.

And I didn't lie there in bed while he took a shower that morning, fighting down the temptation to climb in with him on the pretext that we had to conserve water, har har har.

I didn't fall for him on the way to the airport, or while standing in line to get our boarding passes or while sitting on the runway waiting to take off. I didn't fall for him when I woke up during the final approach to Washington National to find that I was drooling on his shoulder for the hundredth or two hundredth of five hundredth time in the past five years. And I didn't fall for him when that sweet little old lady at baggage claim told me that my "husband" was so very handsome. Even though she was right.

I didn't fall for him as he drove me to my apartment, or when he helped me carry my luggage inside, or even when I stood in front of my living room window and watched the tail lights of his car fade into the darkness.

That's just not how it happened.

How it happened was this: I was sitting at my kitchen table that same night, waiting for the water to boil so I could make some instant decaf before going to bed. I'd unpacked my bag and bundled up the suits I had to take to the dry cleaners in the morning and checked my answering machine and returned the call from my mother, arranging to meet her for lunch the next day. And so I was sitting at the table, decompressing and waiting for the water to boil, and I looked down at the table and I saw a bag of sunflower seeds leaning against the centerpiece.

They were Mulder's. They had to be Mulder's; I never touch the blessed things, because cracking the shells is bad for your tooth enamel. That's a scientific fact; you can look it up. But try to persuade Mulder of that.

So I was sitting there looking at this bag of seeds, and suddenly it occurred to me: I was in love with him.

It wasn't like being struck by a bolt of lightning or hit by a meteor; it didn't land on me like a ton of bricks or leave me short of breath or with heart palpitations. It was just something I suddenly knew. Like a switch had been flicked somewhere, not to coin a phrase.

And here are some of the things I did not do that night: I did not jump into my car and go careening over to Alexandria in the middle of the night. I did not grab my phone and call Mulder and beg HIM to make the trip. I was not swept away by fantasies of his "manhood" or his admittedly superior ass or even that damned oral fixation of his, and I did not lie alone in bed calling his name as I brought myself to orgasm after orgasm. Please.

And I certainly did NOT sit up half the night wallowing in doubt and

insecurity. I didn't even worry about how the Bureau would react, or spend a lot of time fretting over what Mulder would say when I told him (for there was never any doubt that I WOULD tell him). Mulder is my best friend after all, and I knew THAT wouldn't change. We're not teenagers.

What I did do was add Mulder to my mental checklist of things to do the next day: drop off my dry cleaning, have lunch with Mom, find out if Mulder loves me as much as I love him. I even penciled in a time in my mind: three o'clock. And then the water was boiling, so I made myself a cup of decaf and drank it and went to bed. And no, I did not dream.

In the morning when I woke up the feeling was still there -- but I'd known it would be. And I will admit that I lay in bed for five minutes -- but only five minutes -- considering the possibilities should it turn out that Mulder shared my feelings. Just considering mind you -- not fantasizing. And at the end of that five minutes I climbed out of bed and took a shower and got dressed.

I dropped off my dry cleaning and I met my mother and we had lunch together. We had a pleasant visit, she showed me some new pictures of Matthew, and told me about the letter she'd received from Charlie. She did not ask me when I was going to "come to my senses", or interrogate me about how "Fox" was doing. She didn't even cast any knowing looks my way to let me know that SHE knew we loved each other even if WE hadn't admitted it to ourselves yet. My mother has far too much class to do anything like that, even if she thinks those things, which I don't believe she does.

Finally the meal was over and we said our goodbyes, and I climbed into my car and I drove to Alexandria. I didn't have second thoughts as I drove, and I didn't get distracted and pile my car into a telephone pole or plunge it into the Potomac. I didn't get a call from Skinner or Kersh on my cell phone ordering me to leave town on a case without telling Mulder (like I would anyway), and I didn't get a flat tire and meet a charming man who helped me fix it, sweeping me off my feet in the process.

And so here I am, pulling into a conveniently empty parking space in front of Mulder's apartment building at 2:58 p.m. I've always had good timing.

I get out of my car and trot up the steps and into his building. The elevator is waiting on the first floor, and I get on board and ride it up to four. I'd be lying if I said there were no butterflies in my stomach -- this is a momentous thing I'm about to do after all. But all things considered, I'm still pretty calm.

I stop in front of his door and take a moment to straighten the numbers, which are slightly out of alignment as always, and then I reach out and rap lightly on the door. Inside his apartment I can hear the TV playing, and after a moment I hear his footsteps. Of course I recognize them; I've worked with this man for nearly six years.

The door swings open and there he is, wearing a faded pair of Levis and a baggy old sweatshirt and looking absolutely marvelous. His eyebrows raise slightly as he sees me standing there, and I do not believe that I am imagining the fact that his pupils are dilating.

"Scully?" he says.

No, it's not my imagination; they really are dilating, and a slight smile is tugging at the corners of his mouth. I smile back affectionately, and say, "Hi, Mulder." And on an impulse I rise up on my toes and lightly brush my lips against his. "Mind if I come in?"

His eyes widen and his pupils dilate further, and a slow, happy smile spreads across his face as he steps aside and ushers me into his apartment, his hand on the small of my back as always. "Not at all," he says. "As a matter of fact, I was just thinking about you."

Yup, I was right. A switch has definitely been flicked.
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Fini

End
file.